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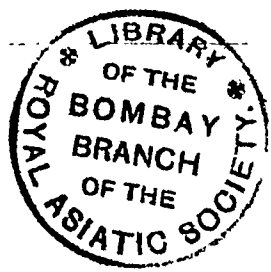

LONDON:
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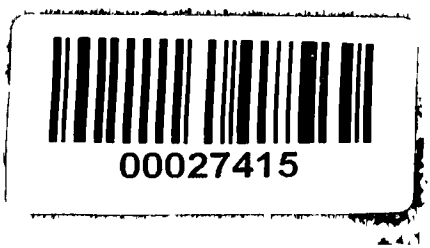

INDIA, GREAT BRITAIN,

AND

RUSSIA.

THE records of history do not present anything more extraordinary than the rise and progress of the British power in India. Other instances may be found of a vast empire arising from a beginning as trifling and unpromising; but the peculiarity in the case of British India consists in this—that the policy of the ruling nation has always been the reverse of aggressive. Power and dominion have for the most part been forced upon England by the necessity of her position; and, with scarcely an exception, her wars in India have been strictly defensive. It is possible indeed that posterity may think that the policy of discouraging enlargement of territory and extension of influence has in some instances been carried to excess; but for charging England with an undue lust of conquest, or an inordinate anxiety for territory or power, there cannot be even a colourable pretext.

Yet, while the British Government in the East has been characterised above all things by a disposition totally at variance with the ordinary views of ambition, the territories subject to its control have gradually enlarged to their present gigantic extent; comprehending within their limits some of the fairest and most fertile provinces of Asia, as well as the best maritime and commercial stations, both on the eastern and western side of India. The agricultural and commercial industry of India, all that she possesses of the elements of wealth and greatness, are thus placed under our guidance and direction. The trust is a most serious one; and, without doubt, our first and most important duty under it is to promote, by all the means in our power, the benefit of the country thus remarkably thrown upon our protection. If this duty be properly performed, it will not be without its reward. India and England have the power of rendering mutual service. Their connection *has been* beneficial to both; and the full measure of advantage to be derived from it has not yet been developed.

No country ever stood towards another in a higher and more dignified attitude than England with respect to India. The people of India look to us for that which during the many centuries of their national existence they never possessed—good government. This master blessing, by giving

security to property and industry, will not only tend directly to improve their physical condition, but indirectly to promote their moral advancement. Our power of doing good is not, however, limited to this one boon, however valuable. In providing for the natives of India a government far superior, both in intelligence and uprightness, to any which they had before known—in giving peace and security where peace and security had never existed—we are far from having exhausted our means of bettering the condition of the people. India has attained a certain stage of civilization, and that not a low one; but it has been stationary for ages, while Europe has been advancing with rapid strides. India has thus remained ignorant of much that is useful to man, and of nearly everything that can elevate and ennoble his nature. Our arts, our literature, our cultivated habits, our moral principles, are among the number of her wants; and, in proportion as her people advance in knowledge, will they feel the importance and necessity of borrowing from those who have enjoyed superior advantages. Their progress will be gradual, and the wise and judicious will not desire that it should be otherwise; but progress there will be, and at every step something will be gained to the great cause of human happiness. This, however, is dependent upon the preservation of the British connexion for a period of time

which at present no one can presume to calculate. The mental movement, to which the friends of humanity look with so much interest, has begun; but the dissolution of the tie which binds India to Britain would put an end to all the bright hopes which, under present appearances, may reasonably be cherished. The desire for improvement is barely awakened, its manifestations have but commenced, even in those parts of India which, from being the principal seats of government and commerce, enjoy peculiar advantages. The leaven will extend its working throughout the countless millions, who are at present ignorant of the commencement of its operation, should time and circumstance be favourable; but these conditions are indispensable. The renovation of an empire is not the work of a year, nor can it be effected but by the preservation of tranquillity and order. From strangers, India has at various times endured all the horrors which can be inflicted by unprincipled ambition, whetted and sharpened by fanaticism and a thirst for plunder. From a nation of strangers she is now receiving instruction in the arts of peace, in the facts most important for man to know, in the sciences that enlarge the mind, and the moral truths that purify the heart; a beautiful contrast to the state of things formerly existing.

A very slight degree of consideration will be

sufficient to show that we are fully justified in regarding the retention of British India under the fostering care of its present rulers, as essential to its progressive emancipation from ignorance, and the evils which follow in the train of ignorance. If the British government were expelled, to be replaced by one or many of native origin, what would ensue? By what would the mild and gentle rule of England be succeeded? By such governments as have heretofore prevailed in India—by such as exist now in those parts of India to which the sceptre of England does not extend;—governments undeserving of the name, and known only by the evils of which they are the cause;—governments in which corruption is the ruling principle, spreading and ramifying through every department;—governments in which the prince, if actively disposed, knows no enjoyment but war, and if devoid of a taste for this occupation, is generally sunk in sloth and sensuality, surrendering his subjects to be plundered without restraint by those who abuse the name of their master to their own aggrandisement. Such are native princes *now*—they will improve as the country improves; but no greater calamity could befall British India at this time, than to be returned to that state of misgovernment under which it formerly groaned, and from which it has been relieved by so extraordi-

nary a train of events as that which has placed the sovereignty in its present hands.

There is yet one other possible change which ought not to be excluded from contemplation. British India might pass into the possession, not of natives, but of another European power. No time need be spent in inquiring which of the nations of Europe would have the best chance for the prize, should England lose it. There is but one power, which, according to present appearances, could have the least chance of success. Suppose then that Russia, in extending her boundaries further and further towards the east, should dispossess Britain of the whole, or the larger part of her Indian possessions,—would the change be for the better, as far as India is concerned? Russia is by no means sparing in professions of liberality and the love of knowledge; and in some respects her actions have not discredited her professions. Scientific talents and attainments have been very warmly patronised at St. Petersburgh—they have been assiduously wooed from distant parts of Europe, and in many instances liberally rewarded. But the object has been to make them the instruments of advancing the power of the government over the people—not to improve the condition of the latter, or to raise them in the social scale. While the government of Russia has been assiduous in

drawing to its capital men of science and liberal acquirements, has it ever manifested the least desire to extend to the vast population which it rules the advantages of knowledge and literature? *Savans* have been congregated at St. Petersburgh either for the assistance which they could lend to the aggressive spirit of the government, or for the character which was to be gained by an ostentatious patronage of science. Russia has never yet made an effort to raise the character of her subjects. Where anything has been done, the labour has been directed the other way. Let Poland answer for this. In the true spirit of despotism, Russia hates enlightenment, because she fears it. Would she promote in the East that which she persecutes in the West? Would she afford the means of diffusing in India that knowledge and those principles which, if possible, she would extinguish and destroy in Europe? They must be endued with more than even Oriental credulity who can believe this.

To the friends of India, then, it must appear most desirable that English supremacy should long be maintained in that country. The British government may have committed errors, but it has never been unwilling to perceive, nor slow to correct them. Looking indeed at the circumstances under which our Indian possessions have been acquired, so far from feeling surprise that any errors have been committed, we should rather be induced to

wonder that they have not been more numerous. We first appeared in India as traders, and for a long period our character in this respect underwent little change. It was not till nearly the middle of the last century that any considerable accession of territory was obtained, but from that period our dominions continued to extend, until they have reached their existing limits. In the country of which we thus became possessed, we were not only strangers, but the impediments to our acquiring that intimate acquaintance with the people, which is necessary to enable us effectually to improve their condition and advance their happiness, were many and great. The habits of the people were altogether different from our own, and were such, moreover, as seemed almost to preclude that social intercourse by which alone the natives and the aliens could arrive at a just appreciation of the characters of each other. Their religion was not ours, nor their standard of morals. The forms of government to which they had been accustomed were such as were repugnant to Englishmen; a mode of raising revenue had existed from remote ages, which bore no resemblance to any which ever prevailed in Europe, and this, together with the doctrines of the property and occupancy of land, formed a science of no ordinary perplexity, the mysteries of which have indeed not yet been completely fathomed,

notwithstanding the research which has been expended upon the subject. The languages, too, by which communication was to be carried on, opened a study for which time was necessary, in order to prepare the appliances. These languages differed widely from those modern tongues with which we are most familiar in our intercourse with the world, as well as from the ancient languages which form the studies of our youth. They were generally also without literature, and this increased the difficulty of providing proper means for their acquisition, no less than of the acquisition itself. We found the existing institutions a mass of abuses, and these abuses were, in many instances, made a source of reproach to the European government, as though it had introduced them. It was indeed a duty to remove such scandals with as little delay as possible; but it must not be denied, that some European remedies, ill adapted to the Oriental constitution, were applied hastily and unadvisedly, and that, in some instances, the medicine increased the malady which it was meant to cure. The situation of the British government was thus a most unenviable one. If things were allowed to remain as they were, it was blamed for protecting abuses: if a change were introduced, and did not work well, the government was still blamed (and with more appearance of reason) for injudicious and abortive experi-

ments. In the midst of their difficulties, the government had, under all circumstances, to provide a given amount of revenue to meet the necessary outgoings, and to maintain the integrity of the British dominions against the attacks both of European and native enemies. The latter object was to be accomplished by means, of which the history of the world affords no other instance—by a native army, raised, disciplined, and paid, to uphold the supremacy of a foreign power. These difficulties, although amply sufficient, were increased by the manner in which India questions were taken up in England, whenever any departure took place from the usual national apathy on the subject. For many years the misgovernment of India was a stock grievance; and persons, who knew no more of the country than that the people were black, and the climate hot, were loud and eloquent in denouncing every act of the government, as well as the character of every individual connected with it. The clamour of the ignorant, as it originated, so it was fed, by the representations of the interested or the disappointed—of men who hoped to carry their public spirit to a good market, or whose object was revenge for personal injuries, real or fancied. The difficulties of governing India for its own benefit—difficulties inseparable from the attempt—were thus increased by the medium of ignorance, interest, and passion,

through which the necessary measures were viewed; yet the ruling powers persevered, and the seeds of civil and social improvement have struck root: attention and judicious culture only are wanting to bring them to maturity.

It has never been the intention of the British rulers of India that the people of that country should be kept in an eternal state of pupilage. The object in view has been to prepare them for the enjoyment of political and civil rights, and to bestow them by degrees, as the people became qualified to exercise them with advantage to themselves and the community. In conformity with these views, natives have been admitted to judicial offices, to an extent which the late Mr. Mill declared he should have feared to recommend. Where the forms of English law prevail, natives now sit as jurors, and exercise the office of justice of the peace. To prepare them for the proper discharge of these, and even higher duties, schools have been established, and education, upon the enlarged principles by which it is governed in Europe, is extending itself from the Presidencies into the country. The anxiety of the rulers on this subject is happily now beginning to be met by a corresponding anxiety on the part of the people. The latter are becoming as eager to receive, as the former to bestow. The want being felt, the means of supply will not be tendered in vain. It

must be gratifying to our countrymen to know, that throughout India, where the desire for education has begun to prevail, it is directed towards an English education. In one sense, this may be said to be the effect of the relative position of England towards a large part of India. It is the effect of her moral power—of the respect which is entertained for the nation which, having won so mighty an empire, has governed it with so much wisdom and liberality. It is not an empty compliment from subjects to their rulers—paid either from fear or from interested hope. It is a sincere and earnest feeling; not confined, be it observed, to the British territories, but extending, in some instances, to countries over which the British government has never exercised any sovereignty, and with which it has scarcely any connexion. From the Punjaub, with which till latterly we were hardly acquainted at all, applications have been made for the means of English education, so frequent and so pressing, that the government of India has been almost compelled to attach a schoolmaster to the establishment of their political agent. Even in the seminaries of Persia, where political circumstances would seem little favourable for such a manifestation, the desire for English education is felt, and English works are eagerly sought and studied. In these symptoms of intellectual life, the English patriot will rejoice, because he will

discern in them the means, properly directed, of rendering the literature, the science, and the moral influence of his country predominant in Asia. The philanthropist, of whatever nation, can scarcely derive less pleasure, from perceiving so large a portion of the human race preparing to shake off the fetters of mental bondage by which they have so long been enthralled, and seeking to place themselves on a level with those countries which, having received from Asia the elements of cultivation, are now returning it multiplied a hundred-fold. Yet both patriot and philanthropist must be on their guard against self-deception. There has been a most auspicious commencement of the reign of knowledge, which we hope is to supersede that of mere force; but it is only a commencement. Many years of labour will be required before the progress of improvement in India can be pronounced safe and certain. Those years must be years of security and of stable and vigorous government. The people are not yet sufficiently advanced to be left to themselves; their passive character requires, for the present, at least, that the stimulus of government support should aid the cause of education. War *within the British frontier* would divert the attention of government from all questions of internal improvement, at the same time that it would discourage the people; for, when men feel uncertain of preserving life, or of obtaining the

means of life, they will have little disposition to the acquisition of knowledge. Peace, then, throughout the vast circumference of British India is indispensable to improvement. If war be inevitable, let it be kept at a distance. That this is desirable for India can scarcely admit of question; and if it be asked why England should take an interest in the matter, it will not be difficult to furnish an answer. The question is not an unreasonable one; for, though India has peculiar claims upon us, arising from a connection which now begins to acquire something of the sanctity which time only can confer, it could not be expected, upon the principles by which national intercourse is governed, that we should continue to protect that country, if we thereby inflicted injury upon our own. It is fortunate, however, that we have not to choose between philanthropy and self-interest—between the duty of doing good to the full measure of our ability, and the necessity of protecting ourselves from loss or suffering. Whether we inquire into the interests of India, or into those of England in reference to that country, we shall (if our inquiry be conducted fairly) arrive at a common conclusion—that the connection between the two countries ought to be preserved.

England carries on with India a lucrative and increasing commerce. That commerce, like most of the elements of improvement in India, is yet but

in its infancy. The next generation will see it vastly extended; and that which succeeds will behold it still enlarging itself, but still susceptible of further increase. The wide-spread and fertile provinces of India are capable of producing, in almost boundless quantities, articles which are of prime necessity to the manufacturing power of England; and that power can supply to the natives of India commodities which are of prime necessity to them, on better terms than they can procure them at home. The cotton of India may be imported into this country, manufactured into cloth, then returned to the place from which the raw material was obtained, and sold at less price than home-manufactured goods; yet yielding a profit at every step of the transaction. Here, then, is a source of prosperity to the agricultural industry of India and the manufacturing industry of England. From the nature of the climate and the established habits of the people, cotton piece-goods will continue to furnish the clothing of the mass of the people of India as they have hitherto done. England can produce these goods at a cheaper rate than any country in the world. But to enable England to keep employed her untiring and almost unlimited machinery, a constant and steady supply of the material for its operation must be found. India can afford this. It is true that at present but a small part of the supply is derived from that

quarter; but it is increasing; and in the event of any sudden suspension of supply from other countries, how greatly would it increase, and how incalculable would be the advantage of being able to turn to the East as a resource against disappointment in the West! Such disappointment is by no means beyond the limits of possibility. We have been at war with America—we may again be in that state, however anxious to avoid it. What would be the condition of Lancashire and the south-west of Scotland, if the supply of cotton were interrupted? What would be the condition of our general commerce, if one of our most important articles of export could no longer be furnished? Is it not wise, then, to guard against circumstances which may arise, in despite of all that sagacity can do to foresee, or prudence to avert them?

A sufficient and certain supply of cotton being essential, not merely to the prosperity but to the very existence of our principal manufacture, it is not unnatural to place it foremost; but India can supply many other articles for which a steady and increasing demand exists in this country. We may select silk for an illustration. The silk manufacture of England has greatly increased, and will probably continue to increase for a long period. From India the manufacturer may depend upon an almost inexhaustible supply of this article, the quality of which will improve in proportion to

the encouragement which the grower receives. Sugar is a commodity which habit has rendered a necessary of life. The freight of so bulky an article from such a distance is certainly a serious drawback upon its general consumption here; but if a supply from the colonies, which have been accustomed to furnish it, should cease or be seriously diminished, the power of resorting at once to another market would prevent the occurrence of any great inconvenience to the consumer.

In these instances, and in many others which might be quoted, India has the power of ministering to our wants. In return for her commodities, we have the means of clothing her myriad population in the productions of our mills and looms. The quantity of British goods at present consumed by the people of India is enormous; although the consumption has been greatly checked from two causes—the poverty of a great portion of the people, and the difficulty of finding returns. These causes will disappear as the march of commercial enterprise proceeds. The poverty of the people will be removed by the increase of employment, and the intelligence that will be diffused among them will tend to the improvement of their staple articles of silk and cotton, so as to enable them to compete successfully in the market with similar productions from other countries. The fertile plains of India will afford employment to the hundreds of

thousands who depend for subsistence on the prosperity of the manufacturing establishments of Great Britain, and those establishments in return will contribute to the comfort and well-being of the people of India, while enriching the coffers of the British capitalist, and creating for the British workman fresh sources of demand for his labour and his skill.

India wants capital—England has superabundant capital seeking employment. A portion of that capital will certainly find its way to improve the cultivation of India, now that the country is open to European enterprise, and the prospect of return is so fair and promising. It has been said, in disparagement of the hopes entertained on this subject, that "there has been no rush of capital towards India." Nothing can promise better for a sound and flourishing trade. We have witnessed on many occasions a rush of mercantile capital and enterprise to a particular point, and its invariable consequences have been disappointment, bankruptcy, and ruin to the speculators at home, while the country towards which the rush has taken place, so far from having been benefited, has been thrown back. It is scarcely necessary to refer by way of illustration to South America. Happy is it for India that the merchants and capitalists who are turning their attention thither, are disposed to proceed with caution as well as spirit, and to make their investments a source of perma-

nent benefit to the country, as well as to themselves.

One point ought not to be overlooked, because it affects the prosperity of a large and most valuable body of persons, who for years past have been complaining, that their interests were neglected and their trade declining. The trade between India and England, being entirely an English trade, will be carried on exclusively in British bottoms. It cannot flourish, without adding greatly to the prosperity of the shipping interest—it cannot decline, without inflicting upon that interest serious injury.

All classes, then, in this country seem interested in the prosperity and extension of the commerce of India. The capitalist who seeks a profit on his accumulations; the merchant who wants a favourable market; the manufacturer who seeks employment for his machinery; the labourer who looks to his daily hire for his daily bread; the landlord and farmer who raise food for all these persons, and who can neither receive rent nor pay it, unless the nation be prosperous; the shipowner and the sailor, whose business it is to transport the superfluities of one part of the world to supply the necessities of another;—all have an interest in the commerce of a country, containing millions of acres of fertile land capable of producing an abundance of articles which we desire to possess, and millions of custom-

ers for commodities which we are most anxious to dispose of. All, consequently, have an interest in the preservation of India to this country.

It may indeed be argued, from a strained application of the received doctrines of trade, that for commercial purposes it is of little importance whether India remain attached to this country or not,—that if it be the interest of the two countries to trade together, they will do so, whether subject to the same government or not. Without impugning the theoretical truth of the principle, it must, like all other abstract truths, be modified with respect to practice. The result predicted in the event of a separation of the two countries would not take place, unless the government of India, when withdrawn from Britain, fell into the hands of liberal and enlightened persons, understanding the true principles of trade and prepared to uphold them. It is admitted by the most tenacious advocates of theoretical principles, that there ought to be a reciprocity of advantage between nations, and that it is right to make a difference in our commercial codes between those nations who are disposed to treat us with liberality, and those who still determine on maintaining in all their rigour the old principles of exclusion. It therefore becomes necessary towards forming a right conclusion, that we should inquire by what sort of government that of Britain is likely to be replaced.

This question has been already opened, and the result is not such as to afford us much confidence in the security of our commerce with India, when our dominion was at an end. If native princes should supplant us, the government would rest with men filled with native prejudices; glowing with the fierce bigotry generated by Asiatic creeds; ignorant of the just principles of trade; careless about the improvement of the country, provided their own ruling passion, whatever it might be—whether ambition, avarice, or the love of ease and luxury—could be gratified; calculating, as uncivilised and semi-civilised men always do, that a penny in hand to-day is better than a crown a year hence; ready, in consequence, to crush commerce by onerous duties, for the purpose of bringing a temporary accession to their exchequer; actuated by intense hatred of the people to whom they had succeeded, and burning with jealousy of European influence. Could commerce be expected to prosper under the rule of such men? Would it be aided by the re-establishment and extension of the system of transit duties, which have been abolished in a great part of British India, and will probably soon cease throughout? Would capitalists advance their money for the cultivation of a country under such a government? Would industry and enterprise flourish? Would the people continue to

improve, or would they not rather go back? A few lots of the manufactures of Great Britain might find their way into India, but for the most part the people would return to the habits which they have but just quitted. The cotton of India would be worked up on the spot, and though the articles thus manufactured would be dearer than those *now* imported from England, they would probably be cheaper than English goods could *then* be obtained, when the natural progress of trade would be impeded by the vexatious regulations and ruinous extortions enforced by ignorant and vicious governments. It is an established principle of native policy to regard merchants as proper objects of plunder. They must be content by the confiscation of a part of their gains to purchase the liberty of enjoying the rest. This of course must be taken into calculation, and a sufficient sum set apart in the way of insurance to cover the apprehended loss. The risk of the sea is nothing compared with the risk of being plundered by an oriental despot or his functionaries. Of those who maintain that under such a change of government as has been supposed, commerce would continue to prosper, it will not be irrelevant to ask why does not commerce flourish in Africa as much as in North America? Natural causes may be assigned for a part of the difference which we find between these two portions of the globe, but they are in-

sufficient to account for the whole or any large share of it. The main cause is to be found in the barbarous state of the people in the one country, and in the industry and intelligence of those inhabiting the other. If the people of Africa could be raised to the average point of civilization prevailing in Europe or America, would they not be incomparably better customers to merchants and manufacturers than they are now? If good and enlightened government could be established among them, would they not gradually ascend in the scale, and would not their intercourse with commercial nations increase? If then the fact of there being little or no commerce with the greater part of Africa is attributable principally to the barbarous state of the people, and that state is perpetuated by the vile character of their governments, it seems that these are points which materially affect the progress of commerce; and if it would be desirable to remove the causes which deprive Africa of the advantages and blessings which commerce brings in its train, must it not also be desirable to prevent India from falling under the influence of those causes?

Those who argue that the possession or non-possession of a country is of small importance, or of no importance at all, for the purposes of commerce, generally refer to America as an illustration. Before the separation of the United States

from the mother-country, a certain degree of commerce was carried on between them: since the separation, that commerce, so far from falling off, has greatly increased. But it is obvious that in applying the experience which we have acquired in one case of separation to another, we shall be in danger of arriving at a false conclusion, unless the circumstances of the two cases are in every respect precisely similar. Now, so far from this being so in the two cases under consideration, there is only one circumstance in which they will be found to agree—America separated from England, and it is supposed India may separate; in this is all the resemblance. America was in fact peopled by Englishmen, possessing all the tastes, habits, and wants of the nation from which they or their fathers had emigrated. India is a country in which the desire for anything beyond the scantiest amount of food and clothing has scarcely begun to be developed. America had always been supplied from England, had no manufactures of its own, and no means of advantageously establishing any: India has but recently become a customer of England; for ages she manufactured for herself, and, from the simplicity of process and the abundance of labour, her native manufactures might speedily be restored. America was peopled by the most enterprising set of men on the face of the earth—men to whom the excitement of commer-

cial speculation is almost as gratifying as its profits. The inhabitants of India are timid and cautious to a proverb; not indisposed to commerce, but fearful of launching into it upon an enlarged scale; carefully improving minute sources of profit, but little inclined to depart from accustomed routine; and calmly submitting to privations against which bolder spirits would struggle. The government established in America gave security to life and property; whatever a man could obtain he felt certain of being permitted to enjoy. In India, under a native government, this would not be the case; and for this reason, as well as for those already mentioned, the parallel drawn between the actual separation of America and the possible separation of India from England is fallacious and deceptive.

If, instead of consigning India to native governments, we suppose that Russia, after overrunning the countries which at present obstruct her progress eastward, should succeed in driving out the British and occupying their place, the prospects of the commercial world would not be much improved The ambition of Russia is not directed to a single object; extent of empire is one which is never lost sight of; but commercial and manufacturing monopoly is another which is pursued not less systematically and perseveringly. What then have we to expect from Russia? Would that power

act upon the liberal principles of free trade, and open the ports of India to the commodities of the people which she had just expelled? We may readily answer this question by a reference to existing facts. The commercial policy of Russia is strictly exclusive. There is scarcely a manufactured article from any part of the world, the entry of which is not prohibited. The Russian tariff contains about three hundred prohibitions, and its operation is not confined to the ancient dominions of the Czar. When Russia decreed that Poland should no longer preserve even the semblance of an independent state, the tariff of the former country was introduced into the latter. This measure annihilated the commerce of Poland, and sensibly affected that of other countries, both European and Asiatic. The commercial enmity of Russia has been most eminently displayed towards England. Formerly merchants from central Asia attended the great fairs of Leipsic and Frankfort, and purchased there large quantities of British goods, which were carried in some instances to the very borders of China. The Russian government has put an end to this trade, by refusing to the goods a transit through the territory subject to the Emperor. The trade to Wallachia and Moldavia has also been destroyed by the Russian occupation of those provinces. It is to these causes that we are to attribute the great decline of

the German trade with this country, which merchants are well aware began to take place before the commercial league came into operation. If Russia could displace our authority in Asia, she would pursue the same course which she has steadily followed in Europe. From the hour that a Russian deputy gave law from the government-house at Calcutta, not a single article of British manufacture would be received in India.

If then the commerce of England with India is worth preserving, India must not be allowed to fall under the dominion of Russia.

There are some financial considerations also connected with the question, which, although of inferior importance to those having reference to commerce, cannot altogether be disregarded. Though India were lost, a portion of the charges incurred by protecting it would remain—the principal and interest of India stock, the book and bond debts, and other charges of minor importance, but amounting in the aggregate to a considerable sum. These are at present charges upon India; and there is nothing unfair in this, for the debts were contracted for the benefit of that country, and the payments are made for "value received." But if India be torn from us, how are these claims to be discharged? There are but two methods of dealing with them. One is the application of a sponge. It has the advantage of great sim-

plicity, but it is not the most reputable mode of extinguishing debt," nor is it one which the government of Great Britain could decently apply with regard to debts contracted by its authority and under its sanction. The only mode remaining must, therefore, it is presumed, be adopted, and in that case England must take upon itself the burdens of India. This would not be a popular course now; and it would certainly be much less so when England, deprived of her Indian possessions, and excluded even from the advantages of commercial intercourse with them, should have ceased to derive any benefit from the country whose debts she was required to pay. The transfer of the debt of India would make an addition to the large debt of England, which would not be inconsiderable. The proposal to undertake the debt would necessarily meet with opposition, and if it were rejected, the extent of ruin which would overtake individuals and families, suddenly reduced from affluence to poverty, is fearful to contemplate.

While adverting to the financial part of the inquiry, it is important not to pass over the fact that India not only pays all the expenses of her government, but, indirectly at least, contributes to aid the finances of England. There may be reasons, in some cases, even for maintaining possessions which are a source of expense to the parent country. Great national objects may be at stake,

and the expense may be justified by the necessity. But of the defence thus afforded, India has no need. The entire charges of her establishment, civil and military, and the interest of all debts contracted on her behalf, are defrayed from her own resources. Englishmen participate largely in the advantage of this expenditure, and a considerable portion of it is remitted to this country. The tribute thus rendered to England acts as a stimulus to our internal trade, and provides for many the means of comfortable subsistence. So far therefore from costing anything, India actually supports herself, and pays us munificently for our protection. The attempt to tax for their own defence the North American Colonies, which we ourselves had planted, lost us their possession. India, where we are a handful of foreigners in the midst of nations flourishing long before we had a national existence, renders us a noble tribute for the advantages which she derives from our presence and support.

India has done more than this. She has contributed to the success of our arms beyond the limits of her own soil, and will again, should circumstances require. It is well known that the Hindoos are especially averse to the sea. Yet this repugnance has been overcome, when its indulgence was inconsistent with their duty as soldiers. In Egypt, and in the islands of the Indian Ocean, the troops

of India have aided in gaining victories, of which we were to enjoy the glory and the reward. An army of about 200,000 men, commanded by countrymen of our own, and supported without any charge upon our finances at home, is thus at our disposal; and whenever their services may be required, in support of the interests of the two countries, we may be certain that they will be rendered faithfully and efficiently.

The maritime force of India is very inferior to its army, yet it renders valuable assistance to English commerce in seas where piracy is scarcely regarded as an unlawful occupation. The application of steam will increase its efficiency, and add to the facility of discharging its duties. Our commerce is, in this instance, protected at the expense of India.

It must be assumed that, under any circumstances, we do not intend to relinquish the navigation of the Indian seas. If the trade with China were discontinued, a revolution must be effected in the habits of the people here, greater than any which has taken place since the use of tea became general, and far more sudden than that by which its introduction was effected. Supposing Russia to have possession of India, our trade to China and the eastward would scarcely be pursued with the same security as at present. The possession of the coast would give the command of the seas;

and from the manner in which Russia is adding to her maritime force, wherever she has the means, we may be certain that she would not fail to improve to the utmost whatever advantages she might acquire in India. With the Indian seas covered by the ships of a rival and hostile nation, where would be our commercial security, even with regard to places not under the direct control of the enemy? During the last continental war, the French and Dutch were for a time enabled, by the possession of a few islands, greatly to embarrass our commerce, and to subject us to very severe losses. What would be the condition of our trade to the eastward of India, if, during any future war, the coast of that country were also occupied by enemies? The friendship of India is a main element of our strength and greatness. To trifle with it would be madness.

Statesmen are but too apt to overlook the circumstances which give moral power to a nation; but a more fatal error cannot be committed. "National character," said Mr. Fox, "is national strength." It is to the influence of this, more than to any other cause, that our position in India is to be ascribed. We are regarded as pre-eminently skilled in the arts both of war and peace—almost invincible in the use of the former, and impressed with an ardent zeal to diffuse the advantages of the latter among the people who yield us obedience.

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In every war that we have had occasion to wage in India, we have been successful—neither native nor alien have been able to stand before us; but our success has been enjoyed with moderation, and made the instrument of benefit to the people. We have purged the country of the organized bands of robbers by whom it was formerly periodically overrun — we have suppressed many atrocities which native governments had not the will, perhaps not the power, to correct. The most flourishing parts of India are those which have been longest under the care of England; in these, too, exists the strongest confidence in our government, and the strongest attachment to it. The good faith by which our proceedings have been happily distinguished from those of other powers, has indeed commanded respect throughout the East; but unquestionably our popularity is greatest where the connexion with us is of the longest standing. Thus, as our empire advances in age, it also advances in strength,—the result of the prudence, moderation, and justice, which have been manifested in its government. Perseverance in the same course will, in all human probability, be followed by the same result. The chance of danger from within will diminish with the progress of time. The recollections which at first operated against us will die away—the associations which bind the people to our rule will grow in strength. If danger

and east, and neither with Nepaul nor Ava was the establishment of the relations of peace attended with any degree of cordial feeling. Against these states, therefore, it is not unlikely that we may be called to defend ourselves, but it is not from them that our main danger arises. Russia, a state whose policy ever has been, and still continues to be, a constant and unabating system of encroachment, has long fixed its desires upon the possession of India, and waits only the arrival of a convenient season for accomplishing its purpose. This is the course which Russia has always pursued. Never endangering her success by precipitation, she spends years in smoothing her way to the attainment of the object in view. The time arrives when the fruit may be plucked with comparative ease and safety, and the world is then astonished by the dexterity and directness with which it is seized and appropriated. Thus has Russia acted in innumerable instances; thus—unless the execution of the design be averted by timely and unceasing vigilance—thus will she act with regard to British India.

Of some of the countries lying between Russia and our frontier, we unfortunately know little or nothing; but there is not a spot of which Russia does not possess the most accurate information, nor a state of any rank or degree which has not been visited by her spies and emissaries. In all the arts

approach, it will be from without. It is against this that we must watch with the most unremitting vigilance. It is this which we must prepare to repel with the most determined energy. We cannot quit the post to which we have been so remarkably called, without showing ourselves unworthy of the name and lineage of which we boast. The loss of India is not to be estimated by the extent of territory, of revenue, or of commercial advantage, of which it would deprive us —in character we should sustain a loss infinitely greater than in any of these, or in all together. The name which once awed every nation would become a word of contempt, and England would at once surrender a reputation which it required centuries to establish.

From the magnitude of the interests at stake, it especially behoves us to be warned in time—to anticipate the approach of danger, however slow or distant the hostile movement—not to wait till the enemy is at the gates of the citadel, but to deprive him of the chance of arriving there.

The sea forms the larger portion of the boundary of British India. No attack need be apprehended in that direction while we retain onr maritime superiority; and when that is lost, we may at once give up all hope of keeping possession of India. The latest wars in which we were engaged, were with our neighbours on the north

of diplomacy, Russia is known to be an adept. She has an agent everywhere—accredited or unaccredited, as may be most convenient. In the latter condition, he may be able to observe and to excite, as well as in the former, and in some cases better; and even if the stamp of authority should become necessary to the success of his mission, means are found of gaining credit to the agent for possessing it, without committing the character of his employers. France has at various periods enjoyed the reputation of being unrivalled in the comprehensiveness of her diplomatic arrangements, and the skill with which they were rendered efficient, both for information and action : but no nation has, in this respect, ever exceeded, or even approached, the Russians. For the exercise of the arts of which they are such accomplished masters, the state of the countries west of India unfortunately affords opportunities the most favourable. Nearly all of them are distracted by factious divisions. Scarcely any can be regarded as competent to their own defence. Some are altogether with the Russians ; others, in despair, are prepared to form the same connexion.

The states of Sinde, occupying the eastern side of the lower portion of the Indus, are understood not to be decidedly unfriendly to us ; but, from various causes, we cannot rely upon them for any efficient support. Above them lies the kingdom

of the Punjaub, ruled by the celebrated Runjeet Singh, an old ally of the British government. He has hitherto been faithful to his engagements; but it might not be desirable to put his virtue to too severe a test. It is a prevailing opinion, moreover, that the stability of the power which he has raised depends greatly on the continuance of his own life. Further, it may be observed that his territories, with the exception of a small portion of which he has dispossessed Caubul, lie within the Indus; and the policy of England should lead to a defence beyond that river.

Persia was formerly regarded as a barrier against Russia, and her friendship was assiduously cultivated with this view. The conduct of Persia has, however, of late been equivocal. The government of that country has been seduced into a course by which, while expecting to advance its own purposes, it was actually playing the game of another state, surpassing that of Persia in power as well as in discretion. The arms of Persia, under the direction of Russia, have been turned against her neighbours in the East. Of this movement Russia meant to reap the advantage, and England was to be the eventual sufferer. There is reason to hope that the insidious policy of the candidate for universal empire may be frustrated, and that Persia may yet remain faithful to her connexion with Britain. The service

which we have rendered in placing the reigning prince upon the throne entitles us to expect this. Our best exertions should now be used to rescue Persia from the degradation and ruin which await her in becoming a Russian province; and, whether we succeed in this or not, we should strive to strengthen ourselves between Persia and the Indus, and to raise a barrier there to assist that afforded by Persia, if the relation of friendship can be maintained, or to supply the want of it, if Persia is to become the victim of Russian ambition.

In that portion of Asia which has just been indicated, lies a country long distinguished in the annals of the East for the production of men eminently endued with all those qualities which are most valuable in the soldier. To that country should the attention of England be directed, as the means of rolling back the flood of Russian aggression, which, unless resisted, will at no distant period menace the passes of the British frontier, if it do not force them.

Affghanistan was even in modern times regarded as a formidable neighbour; and one of the objects of our alliance with Persia was to protect British India from invasion by the Affghans. It has been weakened by civil wars, but its position renders it of importance to cultivate a connexion with it. If an attempt should be made to invade India, the route of the invading force will probably be through

Affghanistan. The friendship or enmity of the rulers of this country could, therefore, at no time be strictly regarded as a matter of indifference. It is now become of more importance than ever that we should in Affghanistan possess the means of repelling the march of a hostile army towards India; but the value of these provinces as outworks has long been acknowledged, and it is a proverbial expression that "Caubul and Kandahar are the gates of Hindostan."

Caubul and Kandahar are the gates of India; but it would not be desirable that England should have actual possession of them, even though possession were within her reach. By extending our frontier so far to the westward, we should only be pushing it towards the most wily and determined of our enemies, and thus bringing nearer an adversary whom it is our policy to keep at a distance. A system of alliances judiciously formed with the princes of Affghanistan would give us exactly the security which we want; our object being, not aggrandisement but defence—not the gratification of any ambitious views entertained by ourselves, but the frustration of those of Russia. There are undoubtedly difficulties in the way. Affghanistan is divided among several chiefs, some of them actuated by bitter enmity towards each other, and none of them perhaps in their hearts regarding the rest with much cordiality. An

exiled prince of that country is at this time an actual guest in the British dominions. Runjeet Singh is not well disposed towards the Affghan princes, nor they towards him; and his overrunning Peshawar has never been forgiven by its former possessors. His heresy, too, assists in rendering him odious; and the orthodox Mahometans, while seeking aggrandisement or revenge at his expense, may readily persuade themselves that they are fighting the battle of heaven. To aid these elements of fermentation, we cannot doubt, although we may be unable to produce positive proof of the fact, that Russian intrigue is actively at work, cajoling or threatening as may best answer the purpose. This last is the most discouraging circumstance of all; but, if it dismay us, we are unworthy of being the countrymen of those who laid the foundations of our Indian empire. There will be difficulties in the way of a satisfactory settlement; but Russia knows nothing of difficulties but to surmount them. England has been placed in circumstances of far greater difficulty in India, and has emerged from them with honour and with accession of strength. The Marquis Wellesley was surrounded with difficulties, from which he disenthralled himself and his country with extraordinary skilfulness and success. Lord Hastings, on his arrival in India, succeeded to a post of high honour indeed, but

also of extreme difficulty and danger. He applied himself vigorously to the arduous duties before him, and he placed British India in a state of greater security and tranquillity than it had ever previously enjoyed. These great men effected their objects by a union of military and diplomatic operations. In all probability we may accomplish our objects now by negociation alone, provided we are able to show that, if war be necessary, we are not afraid of it. There is no security for peace equal to that which is afforded by being fully prepared for war. It surely would not be presuming too much upon our position in India to assume the part of a mediator between the different rulers whose dissensions now distract the Affghan territory, and will, unless remedied, render it an opening for Russia in due time to advance to the Indus, preparatory to crossing it for the subjugation of Hindostan and the Deccan. On political grounds we have a right to provide for our own safety. On moral grounds the right of interference is equally clear. We shall appear as peacemakers and protectors. We shall be giving security to princes and happiness to the people, at the same time that we are raising a wall for the protection of our own provinces from inroad and molestation. If the sword must be drawn, be it so—and be the guilt upon the heads of those who provoke the encounter! War is an evil;

but it will be a less evil now beyond the Indus than a few years hence on the banks of the Ganges. But, by whom is war to be maintained? It will be instigated and encouraged by Russia—of this there can be no doubt. Russia always prefers to fight by deputy, when it is practicable. But from whence are the means of carrying on war to come? Russia is certainly not at present in a condition to assist Persia or the countries eastward of it, except with promises; and in actual warfare promises do not go far. It is idle to suppose that Russia can assist with men; it is still more idle, it is positively ludicrous, to entertain the notion of Russia assisting her instruments with money. She has money for various purposes of bribery; but sums which render good service in this way, would be quite ineffective towards carrying on even a single campaign. Russia is not without resources; but she has at present rather more demands for their application than are entirely convenient. From Russia the Affghans can get only promises—from England they may obtain either protection or hard blows. This is said in the supposition that the alternative will be offered to them; and the interest and honour of England require that it should be offered.

A satisfactory settlement of Affghanistan is most important in reference to an event which, in the ordinary course of nature, cannot be far

distant. Admitting that perfect reliance may be placed on the fidelity of Runjeet Singh while he lives, it is to be remembered that, though an extraordinary man, the ordinary lot of mortality awaits him, and at his death what will become of his dominions? If confusion should arise in the Punjaub, as will most probably be the case, it would be well that what is immediately beyond should be tranquil. The Punjaub is now regarded as a valuable defence to our frontier; but should that be broken up, and Affghanistan remain alienated from us, we shall not have an ally between British India and its most formidable enemy. Our frontier will have no protection but its natural strength; and if, in the scramble for dominion, any part of the Punjaub should fall to the lot of the Affghans, let it be remembered that by that time, if not under British, they will certainly be under Russian influence, and Russian intrigue will thus be brought to our very threshold.

Suppose, however, that we have secured an ally to the west of Punjaub capable of rendering efficient assistance, the chance of disorder arising in that country is diminished, and if, notwithstanding, it should arise, we have ensured means of suppressing it, and of restoring such a state of things as is compatible with our safety. The disturbers of peace would be placed between two fires, and in the restraint thus created we should have the best

security for a speedy return to tranquillity. It must be recollected that the Indus is just beginning to be regarded as a much more important medium of communication than it has heretofore been thought. It is believed that, both for military and commercial purposes, it is capable of being made eminently useful to British India and Britain itself. But the realization of these hopes must depend upon its banks being occupied by inhabitants friendly to those by whom its waters are navigated.

The importance of securing our frontier in the direction in which it is most readily assailable, and the danger of neglecting the means which are so obviously at our disposal, are subjects so great and overwhelming, that they may seem to throw into the shade considerations of a humbler character. Yet a moment's digression may perhaps be excusable, for the purpose of adverting to the commercial advantages which we should secure by being just to ourselves in Affghanistan and Central Asia. In these countries there is a market for English manufactures, which it rests with the statesmen of India either to preserve or to destroy. The passage up the Indus, and the transit through the different parts of Central Asia, are of course subjected to almost every species of capricious and vexatious interference. Yet such is the elasticity of commerce, that British manufactures make their way

against all these impediments, and nothing short of absolute prohibition appears capable of keeping them out of any market in the world. The duties on merchandize paid at the custom-house of Caubul are said to amount to £800,000 per annum, and a large portion of this merchandise consists of the produce either of Britain or British India. If such a commerce could be established, with nothing in its favour but the absence of positive prohibition—if it can be carried on through the dominions of powers, some of whom are steeped to the very lips in all the ignorance, prejudice, and jealousy with which barbarous people view the operations of trade, and none of whom are entirely free from these defects—if, under such discouraging circumstances, the amount of British goods which pass the custom-house of Caubul be thus great,—what would it be if that country enjoyed the advantage of a wise and vigorous government, and of the improved habits which would thereby be developed among the people? What would be its amount, if a British alliance at once gave stability to the state, and imbued it with those principles of liberality, by the exercise of which the stream of commerce would flow without interruption or diversion? The British Government could not, indeed, interfere authoritatively with the commercial regulations of an independent state; but it could offer suggestions, and tender

advice—it could scatter the seeds of sound principles, and leave their growth to the operation of time and reason. These teachers would gradually effect all that the most zealous friend to trade could desire. Ignorance would be dispersed, prejudices would yield, and an enlightened regard to self-interest would supersede that ill-directed passion which previously had defeated its own ends by the perverse means which it took to forward them.

It may be remarked also, that a friendly communication might and ought to be cultivated with every country of Central Asia with which we have at present no connexion. The Russians, "wise in their generation," are dispersing political and commercial emissaries in every direction. We have too uniformly followed the policy of keeping aloof from our neighbours. It is not necessary that with all of them we should be in intimate alliance; but we might, both for purposes of defence and commerce, seek to extend our influence somewhat wider than we have been accustomed to do. Central Asia is about to become a much more important part of the world than it has hitherto been. Russia will take care to turn the current of improvement to her own advantage, if we refuse to mingle with it. This is the true secret of her rapid progress. She is ever watchful, and no opportunity is suffered to escape un-

improved. Whatever cards are dealt her, she makes the best of them; while we, when fortune is inviting our acceptance, decline it, pushing by, with coldness and unconcern, opportunities from which our rival would extract the most beneficial results. Looking only to the advantages of commerce, how much may be done in the way of improvement by the intercourse of powerful and highly civilized nations, with those which are less advanced in power and civilization! Governments ought not to interfere directly with trade; but by a judicious and enlightened communication with each other, they may do much indirectly and most beneficially to promote it.

But from this brief digression in favour of the interests of commerce, the mind reverts spontaneously to the perilous position of part of the frontier of our Eastern empire, the preservation of which in its integrity is necessary to our retention of any commerce at all in that part of the world. It would be the height of folly to go on believing that all is safe, while the Russians were deliberating at which part they should enter the British frontiers: it would be the height of wickedness as well as folly to attempt to palm such a delusion on the public mind. The truth must not be concealed that the British and the Russian nations are rivals for the possession of India—that the one ardently covets what the other holds, and has been long

working by sap and mine to dislodge her enemy, and vault into the vacant seat. India will not, in the days of any living man, be independent—she will remain as she is, or she will pass from the mild and gentle rule of England under the heavy and galling yoke of the Russian autocrat. England may be supine, but Russia will most assuredly be active and unremitting in her watchfulness and her labours. She will gloat in silence over the slumber of England, and abide in perfect resignation the brief delay which must intervene before her object can be avowed, which will not be till resistance on the part of her opponent is vain, and success on her own part certain. She will attach herself to every court which approaches the British dominions, and thus draw round them a net through which escape will be impossible. If fortune favour her in the South, the great rivers of Asia and the Persian Gulf may enable her to aid her views on India by a naval force. Russia never strikes till she has made sure; and when she acquires confidence enough to relinquish dissimulation, her victim may be regarded as lost. Shall Russia, then, carry on her designs against our Indian possessions to this point, or shall her arm be arrested while the probability of averting it yet remains? Shall we abandon India to the mercies of the spoiler of Poland? Shall our glorious career in the East terminate in disgrace? Shall

we give up all the advantages of the commerce of India, and allow its vast territory to be hermetically sealed against our merchants and manufactures? Shall the hopes of good men for the improvement of India be disappointed—the lamp of knowledge just illumined be extinguished—the light of true religion, which has yet but begun to dawn, be darkened—and those who are rising gradually but steadily into an equality with the most favoured people of Europe, be made the serfs of a government which, though calling itself civilised, is in truth barbarian, and which is the object of hatred and terror in its own dominions, no less than of jealousy and apprehension throughout the rest of the world? There is time for choice—there is time to act upon the choice which honour, and wisdom, and patriotism, and benevolence, and sound policy alike dictate. But there is no time to spare. Action must follow instantly upon decision; and India may yet remain British, and the course of human improvement may be spared the blow which would be inflicted upon it were so large a portion of the world overwhelmed by the dead sea of Russian despotism.

THE END.

LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

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Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 20 February, 2016